

Department of State

TELEGRAM

Pal 23-9 Libya

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
AID-28 CCO-00 FBO-01 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NIC-01
NSC-10 O-03 OC-06 DPR-02 P-03 PER-02 RSC-01 PRS-01
SCA-01 SS-20 SY-03 SCS-04 PC-04 RSR-01 /147 W
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O P 111010Z DEC 69
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5590
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BENGHAZI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
CINCEUR
CINCUSAFE/LAS/GER
7272FTW/WHEELUS
OACSI/DA/WASHDC
CO/EUCOM/FLDELEMENT/USAFAC/FRANKFURT

TRIPOLI 3684

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2, LINE THREE)

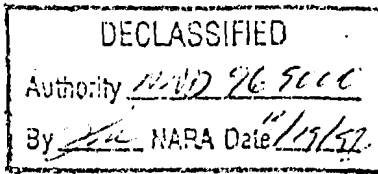
SUBJECT: ABORTIVE COUP AGAINST NEW LIBYAN MILITARY REGIME

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 1815 HOURS DECEMBER 10, LAR RADIO BROADCAST VAGUE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE "REACTIONARIES AND OPPORTUNISTS ACTING FOR IMPERIALISM" FAILED IN "ABORTIVE PLOT." STATEMENT NOTED THAT ATTEMPT CAME AT TIME WHEN LARG IS PURGING LIBYA OF FOREIGN BASES AND REFERRED TO "HIDDEN FOREIGN HANDS". ALERTNESS OF FREE OFFICERS CREDITED WITH FOILING ATTEMPT BY TRAITORS SERVING THEIR OWN PERSONAL INTERESTS.

2. TELEGRAMS CONDEMNING ATTEMPTED COUP AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR RCC BEGAN TO BE BROADCAST SOON AFTER ORIGINAL

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ANNOUNCEMENT. FOR MOST PART, SENDERS OF TELEGRAMS WERE UNKNOWN REPEAT UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL PARTS OF LIBYA.

3. BETWEEN 2030 AND 2130 HOURS MAAG TOURNE CITY OF TRIPOLI JND FOUND NO SIGNS OF ANXIETY. ALL POLICE WERE IN NORMAL POSTS AND NO ARMY PERSONNEL WERE IN SIGHT. LOCAL MEDIA WERE COVERING SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION AT RADIO STATION WHICH FEATURED HUGE PICTURE OF RCC PRESIDENT MU'AMMIR AL-QADHAAFI.

4. LAR RADIO ANNOUNCED AT 2200 HOURS THAT MOD 'AADIM AL-HAWWAAZ AND MOI MUUSA AHMAD AL-HAASI WERE ONLY CABINET MINISTERS INVOLVED IN ATTEMPTED COUP.

5. LAR RADIO READ LONG RAMBLING INTERVIEW BY QADHAAFI AT 0100 AND 0730 DECEMBER 11. INTERVIEW FEATURED BROAD HINTS THAT FOREIGN INTERESTS, IMPLICITLY US AND UK, HAD ROLE IN ATTEMPTED COUP. "EVIDENCE" ADDUCED RE US/UK INVOLVEMENT VERY SKIMPY. QADHAAFI, FOR EXAMPLE, NOTED TIMING OF ATTEMPT CGJGESPONDED WITH BEGINNING OF GASE NEGOTIATIONS. INTERVIEW ALSO REFERRED TO TMC/YICAS CASE FOR WHICH HAWWAAZ HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE LARG OFFICIAL. QADHAAFI NOTED THAT DUE TO INTEREST OF AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HE HAD PRESSED HAWWAAZ FOR FINAL RESOLUTION OF CASE BUT THAT HAWWAAZ HAD PREVARI-GATED. QADHAAFI SUGGESTED THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAWWAAZ AND TWO AMERICAN COMPANIES WAS SUSPICIOUS, AND ASKED WHETHER THIS CASE HAD RELATIONSHIP TO COUP ATTEMPT. HE THEN PROMISED TO SUPPLY ANSWER.

6. QADHAAFI INTERVIEW ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT HAWWAAZ AND AL-HAASI WERE UNDER ARREST WITH MORE ARRESTS TO COME FROM AMONG HIGH RANKING OFFICERS IN WHOM RCC HAD PLACED CONFIDENCE BUT WHO CONTINUED TO LOOK DOWN ON LOWER RANKING FREE OFFICERS COURT MARTIAL WILL BE HELD TO TRY PERPETRATORS, ALL OF WHOM ARE MILITARY REPEAT MILITARY. INTERVIEW INDICATED FURTHER THAT HAWWAAZ HAD BEEN PREVENTED FROM COMMITTING SUICIDE AFTER HIS ARREST.

7. EMBASSY AND MAAG OFFICERS WHO TOURED CITY BETWEEN 0730 AND 0815 DECEMBER 11 SAW NOTHING UNUSUAL. TRAFFIC NORMALLY LIGHT ON SECOND DAY OF 'ID AL-EXTR. AT 0830, HOWEVER, HEAVILY ARMED DETACHMENTS OF TROOPS WERE POSTED AROUND AMERICAN, BRITISH, ITALIAN, AND LEBANESE EMBASSIES. FIF-

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TEEN TROOPS AT AMERICAN EMBASSY UNDER COMMAND OF FIRST LIEUTENANT. AT 1000 ONE SALADIN AND FOUR FERRET ARMORED RCARS TOOK UP POSITIONS IN VICINITY US EMBASSY. ONE SALADIN AND THREE FERRETS WERE LATER POSTED AT BRITISH CHANCERY. BUT REMAINDER OF DOWNTOWN AREA OF TRIPOLI CONTINUES HAVE FESTIVE AND RELAXED HOLIDAY AIR. WHETHER RCC IS ORGANIZING "SPONTANEOUS" DEMONSTRATION AGAINST US AND UK CHANCERIES OR WHETHER IT HAS LEARNED LESSON OF BALFOUR DAY IS NOT YET CLEAR.

8. BRITISH EMBOFFS INDICATE THAT HAWWAAZ WAS STILL ACTING EA MOD AT NOON ON DECEMBER 7, BUT THAT HIS DESK WAS MANNED BY ARMY MAJOR EVENING DECEMBER 9 WHO WAS INTRODUCED TO WAKEFIELD AT MINISTER DEFENSE. (BRITISH IDENTIFIED MAJOR AS MEMBER MOD'S ARMS NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR EQUIPMENT; NAME BELIEVED TO BE BIL GASSEM.) AS REPORTED BY BENGHAZI 1313, HAWWAAZ WAS ARRESTED ON DECEMBER 7 OR 8.

9. COMMENT: SO FAR, ALLUSIONS TO AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN ABORTIVE PLOT ARE TOO VAGUE TO JUSTIFY OFFICIAL REACTION. IF, HOWEVER, ALLEGATIONS BECOME ANY STRONGER OR MORE PRECISE EMBASSY PLANS MAKE ORAL PROTEST TO FOREIGN MINISTER. AT MOMENT, EMBASSY AT LEAST APPEARS, PERHAPS SOMEWHAT PRECARIOUSLY, BE ON RIGHT SIDE JUDGING FROM QADHAAFI INTERVIEW COMMENT RE TMC/ICAS CASE. MEANWHILE MEASURES TAKEN BY LARG TO INSURE SECURITY CHANCERY APPEARS ADEQUATE. WE HAVE ALSO REMAINED FOREIGN MINISTRY BY TELEPHONE ON LARG'S RESPONSIBILITIES INSURE SECURITY CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE. GP-4.
PALMER